

The Morrill Act of 1862:
Intentions and Misinterpretations of “Land-Grant”


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Chapter I

Introduction

The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 has undeniably changed public higher education. Many higher education administrators, faculty, and advocates of higher education cite the land-grant act as the founding legislation of their universities and as a current symbol of their institutions' various behaviors. These behaviors range from providing access for minorities and working classes, to assuring a permanent and predominant status for agriculture and engineering, to extension, outreach, engagement and other informal linkages to the citizens of each state.

Much literature, many lectures, and numerous conferences and commissions have attempted to meet one simple charge: to interpret and clarify the mission of land-grant universities according to the original Act proposed by Senator Justin Morrill and signed into law by Abraham Lincoln in 1862. These efforts have brought together the best minds from the ranks of historians, agricultural leaders, and presidents of major universities. Their findings have been insightful, realistic, and thought provoking. However, their ultimate goal has not been achieved. To date, there exists a wide chasm between the interpretation held by the agricultural community¹ and the interpretation held by well-informed agricultural leaders and non-agricultural personnel in land grant universities. In 1998, Judith Ramaley, President of the University of Vermont said, "Most commonly, agriculture and natural resources and engineering and technology, which are the

¹ Throughout this paper, "agricultural community" will be used as a general term to characterize those people in the 21st century engaged in agriculture who speak with presumed understanding but not necessarily well informed insights into the legislated meaning of "land-grant" as in land-grant universities. These people could be farmers, agricultural leaders, agribusiness managers, members of the agricultural media, legislators, and agricultural students.

contemporary versions of ‘agricultural and mechanical arts,’ are viewed as synonymous with the land-grant mission, along with the research stations and Extension Services supported in part by federal appropriations. The rest of the university is usually involved with other matters.”²

Into the 21st century, Ohio's agricultural community commonly labels The Ohio State University as “land-grant,” referring to the Morrill Act of 1862. This label of “land-grant” implies selective messages and promotes certain expectations concerning the behavior of the University, specifically its treatment and support of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. This label is continually justified by quoting the Morrill Act of 1862: “the leading object shall be...to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts...” Although, literally quoted correctly, confusion still exists concerning the historical context, intent, and actual effects of the Morrill Act of 1862. This confusion provides the impetus for this study. These misperceptions held by Ohio’s agricultural community have important implications for the College and the rest of the University.

More specifically, the following three propositions will guide this study:

1. There is a continuing confusion about the original intent of the Morrill Act of 1862.
2. There is a mistaken notion concerning the actual demand for and impact of early land-grant institutions on the agricultural and working classes.
3. There are erroneous beliefs concerning the current mission of The Ohio State University as it relates to the Morrill Act. These beliefs are attributed to

² Judith A. Ramaley, *A Distinct and Intelligible Theory* (Justin Morrill Symposium, 1998)

confusion between the purposes and effects of the Morrill Act of 1862, the Hatch Act of 1887, and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914.

Chapter Plans

Chapter II will discuss the historical context of higher education prior to the Morrill Act of 1862. It will also describe the key provisions of the Act that are germane to this paper.

Chapter III will focus on the interpretation and misinterpretation of the Morrill Act.

Chapter IV will investigate the actual effects of the Morrill Act.

Chapter V will present conclusions and implications.

Chapter II

History of the Morrill Act

Legislation cannot be understood or appreciated for its true intent without the perspective of the legislatures of the time period. This point of view is even more critical for an Act of Congress more than 140 years old. Perspective on the environment of American higher education in the early and mid-1800s is necessary to better understand the environment from which the Morrill Act sprung and grew. Perspective can also be gained from understanding the early founders of the movement under girding the Morrill Act. Ultimately, an analysis of the actual language of the Morrill Act, with interpretation by an early higher education leader, will serve as a foundation for a more in-depth analysis of the Morrill Act.

The first college in the United States was founded in 1636 by the Massachusetts Bay Colony and through the generous donation of John Harvard, whose name the institution has carried almost since its inception.³ The colleges of William & Mary, Yale, Princeton, University of Pennsylvania, King's College (renamed Columbia after the revolution), Brown, Rutgers, and Dartmouth followed Harvard. These nine colonial colleges "were established primarily for religious purposes—to train up a body of learned and godly ministers; though as a secondary consideration they were expected to serve other ends."⁴

These "other ends" were critically important to the independent people of the American colonies. Control of institutions could not be entrusted solely to religious

³ Elmer E. Brown, *The Origin of American State Universities* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Publications, 1903), 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 16

organizations that held no allegiance to the emerging needs of a burgeoning republic. It was observed that "...there was growing up a widespread distrust of the colleges as then conducted..." It was further observed that "no one of the colleges fully answered the public need as regards higher education."⁵ These colonial colleges were modeled after the traditional English universities such as Oxford and Cambridge. Their courses of study consisted primarily of Latin, Greek, philosophy, and some mathematics and religious subjects.⁶ There were two obvious methods for redirecting these private colleges to the public need. The state and federal governments could attempt to wrest direct control from the religious organizations, or new universities could be created that would serve the public good. James Madison suggested in 1787 that a federal university be included in the U.S. Constitution. However, the individual power to establish institutions of education was left up to the states. After the War of Independence, the legislatures of the recently freed states had caught the spirit of education, and plans were under way to establish new institutions of learning at all levels for the newly created nation.⁷

The constitution of North Carolina included the provision that "all useful learning shall be duly encouraged and promoted in one or more universities." A state university began instruction there in 1795. The efforts of Thomas Jefferson came to fruition with the establishment of the University of Virginia, which became the crown of Virginia's well-planned system of education. The state of Indiana adopted a constitution in 1816 containing the following provision: "It shall be the duty of the general assembly, as soon as circumstances will permit, to provide by law for a general system of

⁵ Ibid., 7

⁶ J.B. Edmund, *The Magnificent Charter: The Origin and Role of the Morrill Land-Grant Colleges and Universities*. (Hicksville, New York: Exposition Press, 1978), 4

⁷ Brown, *The Origin of American State Universities*, 35

education...wherein tuition shall be gratis and equally open to all.”⁸ Thus Indiana Seminary was established in 1820, which became Indiana College and then in 1828, Indiana University. In 1817, the territorial government of Michigan created the University of Michigan, supporting it with a grant of territorial land.⁹

The federal government’s use of land-grants did not commence with the Morrill Act of 1862. The land in these land-grants came from the “public domain,” the land that was owned and administered by the federal government. This huge amount of land, 1,442,000,000 acres, was known as the public domain.¹⁰ Today, almost one-fourth of this public domain remains under the control of the federal government. It is mostly comprised of mountainous land in the western states. The United States acquired this vast territory mainly from the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the Florida Purchase of 1819, the treaty with Great Britain in 1846, the treaty with Mexico in 1848, and the Alaska Purchase of 1867.¹¹ Congress made use of this public domain in order to promote settlement of the western parts of the country and to encourage the establishment of institutions of learning for all people.

Congress in the 1800s made three different types of land-grants: 1) land-grants for the public improvement of land, such as the building of canals, highways, railroads, and drainage ditches; 2) land-grants for U.S. sponsored explorers, veterans of the Revolutionary War, and other individuals of concern to the federal government; 3) and

⁸ Ibid., 36

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Edmund, *The Magnificent Charter*, 5

¹¹ Ibid.

land-grants for education of the public.¹² Of these educational land-grants, there were three distinct types.

The first type was known as a section grant for the establishment and support of the first-to-eighth grade schools, known as common schools. These section grants started as two sections and then expanded to four sections per township. Most townships were six miles on each side or 36 square miles. Each section was 640 acres or 1 square mile. These section grants had a profound impact on the development of American education. The result was the multitude of one-room schoolhouses in every township that gave every child access to an 8th grade education. Horace Mann, acknowledged as the father of the common school movement, was the proponent of this legislation.¹³

The second type of land-grant used for public education was the township grant. The Northwest Ordinance in 1787 stated, "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary for good government and the happiness of mankind, schools, and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."¹⁴ Two townships near the center of each state were to be set aside for the support of a "literary institution." In 1836, Congress slightly altered this policy and authorized the granting of two townships: one for the establishment of a seminary of learning within a given territory and the other for the establishment of a state university within any given state. In some cases, the seminary of learning became the location of the first state university. Examples include the University of Michigan and the University of Wisconsin. A total of 46,080 acres was given for the establishment of state universities. Thus, many of the early state universities may also be

¹² Ibid., 6

¹³ Roger L. Williams, *The Origins of federal support for higher education: George W. Atherton and the land-grant college movement*. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 15

¹⁴ Edmund, *The Magnificent Charter*, 3

considered land-grant institutions.¹⁵ By the start of the Civil War, twenty-one state or public universities had been created. However, a new type of college was beginning to emerge in the mid-1800s.¹⁶

At the time Justin Morrill went to Congress, there were already several colleges that had been created to serve a different purpose than that of the classical or even the newly created state universities. In 1855, Michigan and Pennsylvania almost simultaneously established colleges that attempted to create a new type of education. These institutions focused on the great mass of people involved in agriculture. Maryland in 1856 and Iowa in 1858 joined in establishing new colleges to train young men from agriculture.¹⁷

In Michigan, the state agricultural society lobbied for the establishment of a state agricultural college. In 1855, the Governor of Michigan signed the articles of incorporation, locating the new college on a farm near Lansing, and gave control to the State Board of Education.¹⁸ Pennsylvania's Farmers' High School was also incorporated in 1855. Though it implied a lower level work than was seemingly fit for a college, "the name was to allay the suspicions of farmers who might be distrustful of traditional colleges. However, the academic work was to be of collegiate grade, and baccalaureate degrees were to be awarded."¹⁹ The Maryland Agricultural College was chartered in 1856. Its creation was spearheaded by the Maryland State Agricultural Society, with only minimal financial support from the Maryland State Legislature.²⁰ In 1858, the Iowa

¹⁵ Ibid., 6

¹⁶ Eldon L. Johnson, *Misconceptions about the Early Land-Grant Colleges*. (New York, NY: Rockefeller Foundation, 1980) 22

¹⁷ Edmund, *The Magnificent Charter*, xv

¹⁸ Williams, *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education*, 32

¹⁹ Ibid., 33

²⁰ Edmund, *The Magnificent Charter*, 11

Agricultural College and State Farm was created by the passage of a bill by the Iowa Legislature. This bill authorized the sale of 3,200 acres and located the school on a 648 tract of land in the northwest part of Story County.²¹ Iowa's institution was the first to accept the terms of the Morrill Act and become eligible for funds from land-grants.

Jonathon Baldwin Turner, a Professor at Illinois College, is credited as the first to advocate the use of land-grants for the benefits of the industrial classes. In 1850, Turner presented a "Plan for a State University for the Industrial Classes."²² In 1853, the Illinois legislature sent to Congress a set of resolutions that encapsulated Turner's ideas and requested that each state receive \$500,000 worth of public land for the express purpose of creating universities to serve the industrial classes.²³ These resolutions, precursors to Justin Morrill's bill, called upon Congress to donate:

To each state in the Union an amount of public lands not less in value than five hundred thousand dollars, for the liberal endowment of a system of Industrial Universities, one in each state of the Union, to cooperate with each other, and with the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, for the more liberal and practical education of our industrial classes.²⁴

The Illinois resolutions had no lasting effect in Congress, except however, to prepare the way for the first Morrill Bill written by Justin Smith Morrill in 1857. Justin Smith Morrill was a delegate to the U.S. Agricultural Society, which specifically advocated for land-grants for agricultural education in each state, based on Turner's Plan

²¹ Ibid., 13

²² National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC). *The Land-Grant Tradition*. Washington, DC: NASULGC, 1999; available from http://www.nasulgc.org/publications/Land_Grant/land.htm; internet

²³ Coy F. Cross, *Justin Smith Morrill: father of Land-Grant Universities*. (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1999) 78

²⁴ Williams, *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education*, 37

for Illinois.²⁵ Morrill had seen the benefit of a curriculum focused on practical sciences that in his words “would do the greatest good for the greatest number.”²⁶ Morrill’s bill, however, had several important differences compared to Turner’s recommendations. First, the formula for distributing public lands gave deference to eastern states by giving a flat 60,000 acres of public lands to all states but an additional 20,000 acres for each Senator and Representative. Thus, the more eastern populous states received more land. Second, Morrill’s bill expressly included the classical studies, which was not proposed by Turner.

Although Morrill’s bill was opposed by most southern and western members of Congress chiefly because of the concerns about unconstitutionality of the federal government’s role in education, it passed by a margin of five votes in the House of Representatives and three votes in the United States Senate. In February 1859, President James Buchanan vetoed Morrill’s bill on the grounds that it was a dangerous financial drain on the Treasury, a threat to existing colleges, and unconstitutional. With such small margins of victory in Congress, an override of the veto was impossible.²⁷

During the 1860 Presidential Campaign, Jonathon Turner supposedly asked Presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln to support the land-grant college bill. Lincoln is reported to have replied that he would support the bill for state universities. Turner also asked Lincoln’s opponent, Stephen Douglas as well. Douglas also replied in the affirmative.²⁸

²⁵ Johnson, *Misconceptions about the Early Land-Grant Colleges*, 22

²⁶ Cross, *Justin Smith Morrill*, 79

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 80

²⁸ Edmund, *The Magnificent Charter*, 21

After the election of Abraham Lincoln and secession of the southern states, Morrill understood that the chances of passing a land-grant college bill had greatly improved. In 1861, Morrill reintroduced his bill with a few minor changes. The amount of land was increased from 20,000 to 30,000 acres for each member of Congress. Benefits to states that were in rebellion were excluded, and military tactics were included as a subsidiary objective of the curriculum.²⁹

Morrill's bill met little opposition with the southerners gone from Congress. It passed the Senate by a vote of 32 to 7 in June of 1862, and it passed the House by a vote of 90 to 25. President Lincoln held true to his campaign promise and signed the measure on July 2, 1862.³⁰

The specific language of the Morrill Act of 1862 was of critical importance to its implementation. At first reading, the Morrill Act puts forth many ideas concerning a new type of education. However, upon dissection of the law's language, one can start to distill the meaning of specific phrases. Below is the original language of Section 4 of the Morrill Act. The title of the act reads, "12 Stat. 503, An Act donating public lands to the several States and Territories which may provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and mechanic arts." The previous sections are concerned with the use of land scrip and the process for taking, selling, and investment of the proceeds from that scrip. Section 4 contains two provisions, one for the use of the money from the scrip and the second for the educational purpose of the colleges.³¹

²⁹ Williams, *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education*, 38

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 39

³¹ National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC). *The Land-Grant Tradition*. (Washington, DC: NASULGC, 2000) 14

Section 4: And be it further enacted, That all moneys derived from the sales of the lands aforesaid by the State to which the land are apportioned, and from the sales of land scrip hereinbefore provided for, shall be invested in stocks of the United States, or of the State, or some other safe stocks, yielding not less than five per centum upon the par value of said stocks; and that the moneys so invested shall constitute a perpetual fund, the capital of which shall remain forever undiminished, (except so far as may be provided in section fifth of this act), and the interest of which shall be inviolably appropriated, by each State which may take and claim the benefit of this act, **to the endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.**³²

Upon analysis of the education features of the Act, certain phrases stand out as needing further elaboration and explanation.

Without excluding other scientific and classical studies... This phrase can be very simply understood. Although this was to be a new type of education for the public, the value of the traditional and liberal education was indicated. In 1904, William Oxley

³² Ibid., 14 (emphasis added)

Thompson, President of the Association of Land-Grant Universities and Agricultural Experiment Stations, said of this provision:

Evidently there was no design to cast any reflection upon education as it was then encouraged. There was an evident feeling, however, that the so-called classical or literal education did not meet the demand; indeed the approval of that kind and type of education is legitimately in the statute. Any fair interpretation of the expression “without excluding other scientific and classical studies” will recognize general approval of the then existing methods of education.³³

President Thompson obviously defends the classical education of the time. He believed that the Morrill Act was created to add a new dimension to higher education, not to replace an old one.

Such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts...

The phrase “branches of learning related to agriculture” certainly seems to offer a broader perspective than teaching farming techniques. It is interesting to note that until many agriculture programs in higher education began to develop, there was nothing other than “branches of learning related to agriculture,” because there was no defined agricultural curriculum. The science of agriculture was a burgeoning field, with only the most rudimentary advances made in discovery and organization of knowledge as it related specifically to agriculture.³⁴ “Mechanic arts” can be contrasted with “fine arts” or “liberal arts.” It came to have a meaning of anything that deals with machines, construction, and

³³ William Oxley Thompson, *The Mission of Land-Grant Universities*. (Reprint from the Proceedings of the 17th Annual Convention of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations. United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Experiment Stations Bulletin No.142, 1904.)

³⁴ Edmond, *The Magnificent Charter*, 16

industry. As the field developed, “mechanic arts” slowly evolved into the many fields of engineering that we know today.

And including military tactics... Why did the Morrill Act include provisions for training soldiers? At the time of the passage of the Act, the Union was engaged in the Civil War. The Northern forces found that they were lacking qualified officers. The summer of 1861 saw the first battle of the Civil War at Bull Run where the Southerners soundly routed the Union army. The writer of the Morrill Act saw that colleges could just as effectively teach military tactics to emerging generals as it could teach agriculture to emerging farmers.³⁵

In order to promote the liberal and practical education of industrial classes...

Paramount to understanding the intent of the Morrill Act is knowing “whom” is meant by the “industrial classes.” The industrial classes certainly were not the rich and privileged classes. These classes already had access to elite private institutions. “It seems clear that industrial classes as applied to the new colleges meant all those in the most populous occupations characterized by manual labor.”³⁶ William Oxley Thompson describes the industrial classes as those who were abandoned by higher education at the time:

This statute was intended to introduce new lines of education. It was intended to provide what was not already provided. It was to meet the need that has existed but hitherto had been unrecognized. This statute recognizes the industrial classes in the field of agriculture and mechanic arts as substantially unprovided for

³⁵ Ibid., 18

³⁶ Johnson, *Misconceptions about the Early Land-Grant Colleges*, 81

beyond the opportunities in public schools.... This statute was a distinct effort to extend a form of higher education to a class of people hitherto unreached.³⁷

In 1874, another president of a land-grant institution said the same thing in a different way: “The crown of liberal culture is no longer the birthright of a few – it is set within reach of all...bringing glad tidings to the poor.”³⁸

In the several pursuits and professions in life... What is the difference between a pursuit and a profession? A profession is a vocation, a line of work that requires education and technical training. A pursuit is much broader in nature. A pursuit seems to imply that there are many possible routes to using the education that these new colleges would provide. This route might or might not be a formally trained occupation. However, according to the writer, pursuits are just as valid as professions. This phrase reinforces the idea of providing a liberal and practical education through the newly created institutions.

In such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe... Each state that accepted the Morrill Act funds could use its public lands as it saw fit. The states used their liberty to establish many different types of institutions in many different forms. Some states located their Morrill Act institutions with already existing state universities. Other states, which previously had no state institutions, created separate colleges that later became their first state universities. A third group of states created separate Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges that have remained separate from the first state university. The fourth group of states attempted to integrate the Morrill Act into an

³⁷ Thompson, *The Mission of Land-Grant Universities*

³⁸ Johnson, *Misconceptions about the Early Land-Grant Colleges*, 65

existing college, but because of dissension, later created a separate state university. These states, by category, are listed below:

Integral Parts of 1st State Universities

Arizona	California
Georgia	Idaho
Louisiana	Minnesota
Missouri	New Jersey (Rutgers)
Nevada	New York (Cornell)
Tennessee	Vermont
Wisconsin	Wyoming

Separate A&M colleges

Alabama	Colorado
Indiana	Iowa
Kansas	Michigan
Montana	North Dakota
New Mexico	Oklahoma
Oregon	Pennsylvania
South Dakota	Texas
Utah	Virginia
Washington	

A&M Colleges that developed into 1st State Universities

Alaska	Arkansas
Connecticut	Delaware
Florida	Hawaii
Illinois	Kentucky
Maine	Maryland
Nebraska	Massachusetts ³⁹
Ohio	New Hampshire
West Virginia	Rhode Island

Integrated Parts of 1st Universities, later established as separate colleges

Mississippi
South Carolina
North Carolina

Location of the Morrill Act institutions had long-term implications for the colleges in their states. To an extent, this decision of location impacted the actual interpretation and resulting missions of each institution. William Oxley Thompson, in 1904, delineated between the mission of separate A&M institutions and the colleges that serve as both the first state university and Morrill Act institution:

Where the land-grant colleges are combined with State universities, or where the State supplements the national grant by money, it would seem entirely proper, therefore, to pursue work in general science

³⁹ 2/3 of the Morrill Act monies was given to University of Massachusetts for agriculture, 1/3 was given to Massachusetts Institute of Technology for Engineering.

and classics. In the state universities where the combination is complete there is no reason why the classics and literal departments should not be as supreme and superior in their lines as the colleges of agriculture and the mechanic arts are in theirs. In this class of institutions the colleges of agriculture and the mechanic arts, as in the Ohio State University, for example, are really separate colleges. The aim in such institutions is to bring these colleges to the highest point of excellence. This we interpret to be entirely in accord with the text of the bill requiring “the leading object” to be in these lines.⁴⁰

Aside from similarities related to the location of the Morrill Act institutions, many of the individual institutions had their own unique paths including challenges and windfalls, which brought them to their current place in American higher education.

⁴⁰ Thompson, *The Mission of Land-Grant Universities*

Chapter III

Interpretations of the Morrill Act

Ohio's agricultural community continues to promote an interpretation and historical understanding of the Morrill Act of 1862 that can be encapsulated by the following statement: *The Morrill Act's purpose was to support institutions of higher learning, whose mission was "to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts..."*⁴¹ *Therefore, as required by federal legislation, institutions having received the Morrill Act funds must now adequately support the teaching of agriculture. For The Ohio State University, that effectively means supporting the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.*

There is another approach to interpreting the original language and intent of the Morrill Act of 1862. This interpretation is: *The Morrill Act's purpose was to support institutions of higher learning whose mission was to "promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life."*⁴² *Therefore, as required by federal legislation, institutions having received the Morrill Act funds must provide a broad curriculum that attracts and engages students that might not otherwise have access to higher education.*

Although these two interpretations of the Morrill Act of 1862 both use language directly from the legislation, their conclusions with regard to the Morrill Act's intent are very different. For an institution such as The Ohio State University, the difference between these two interpretations can have immense consequences for the mission, goals,

⁴¹ NASULGC, *The Land-Grant Tradition*, 12

⁴² Ibid.

organizational structure, students, and funding of the entire institution, much less the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.

The language of the Morrill Act itself can be used to convey contrasting points of view. As revealed above, the same legislation can be interpreted and used to highlight agriculture and mechanical arts as the leading object or instead used to emphasize the broad education of the industrial classes. These slight variations in interpretation can leave quite different impressions. There continues to be narrow interpretation of the original intent of the Morrill Act of 1862 by the agricultural community. Is this strict interpretation of the Morrill Act justified?

Interpretation of this covenant between institutions of higher education and the federal government requires examination from three different perspectives. First, understanding the mission of institutions that were established prior to the passage of the Morrill Act but with similar purpose can provide an insight into the models that Senator Justin Morrill might have used when drafting his legislation. The second, and most obvious, is to examine the actual language of the bill and to glean understanding of key provisions. The third perspective comes directly from speeches of Senator Morrill and his views on the interpretation of the Morrill Act of 1862.

More than the Act's wording is needed to clearly understand the legislative intent. A historical context is needed to understand Senator Morrill and other leaders' inspiration and experience with the institutions of higher education that were precursors to the Morrill Act institutions. Although twenty-one state institutions had been founded before the Morrill Act, it is valuable to examine one that focused on agriculture.⁴³ A perspective can be gained by learning about the founding of the agricultural school in Michigan.

⁴³ Johnson, *Misconceptions about the Early Land-Grant Colleges*, 38

Senator Morrill must have been familiar with the Michigan actions when he drafted the language of his bill.

The Agricultural College of the State of Michigan was established by the state constitution of Michigan in 1850. The provision states, “The Legislature shall encourage the promotion of intellectual, scientific, and agricultural improvement and shall as soon as practical, provide for the establishment of an agricultural school.”⁴⁴

The college, after lengthy debates concerning its location within the state, finally opened its doors on May 13, 1857, with a dedication by its President Dr. J. R. Williams, a graduate of Harvard. President Williams, in his major address at the dedication of the university, immediately set the tone and direction of this pioneering institution. He stressed the need to develop the “whole man”:⁴⁵

First, we will begin with the farmer himself. It has been aptly said that the only part of European agriculture that has not been improved is the man who tills the soil. Now there's where we ought to begin. Morally, mentally, and physically he must be a man before he can be a farmer. He should be able to execute the duties of highly respected stations with self-reliance and intelligence. He should be qualified to keep his accounts, survey his land, and speak and write his native tongue with ease and vigor. He must learn to subordinate himself with his animal and vegetable life around him to those inexorable laws, moral and physical, the violation of which meets with swift retribution. A great advantage of such colleges as

⁴⁴ Edmond, *The Magnificent Charter*, 7

⁴⁵ Ibid.

this is that the farmer will learn to observe, learn to think, and learn to learn.⁴⁶

President Williams strongly advocated for the education of farmers. He emphasized the development of a person's mental faculties as a necessary foundation for their practical education. This concept of a broad curriculum for universities became a critical point of contention for many universities that were created and supported by the Morrill Act. For The Ohio State University, almost 13 years later, it became a significant turning point for the early development of the institution.

The question was most often posed as broad versus narrow education. This became Ohio State's infamous early disagreement between University Trustees Joseph Sullivant and Norton Townshend. Townshend, President of Ohio's State Agricultural Board, said that Ohio's institution "should educate our farmers as farmers, and mechanics as mechanics,"⁴⁷ but T.C. Jones, another Ohio Trustee argued that "the first thing to do was to educate the man as a man, and not as a machine... The college was not to teach boys to plow, but to educate them..."⁴⁸ This disagreement was a microcosm of the national debate that was waged in almost every state that accepted the Morrill land-grant funds. Eldon Johnson, a recent Provost at the University of Illinois summarizes the debate as follows:

Many grassroots organizations such as the National Grange, Populists, and the agricultural societies lobbied for a narrowly focused institution.

However, the faculty and administrators of the newly created institutions

⁴⁶ Ibid., 8

⁴⁷ James E. Pollard, *The History of the Ohio State University: The Story of its First Seventy-Five Years, 1873-1948*. (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1952)

⁴⁸ Ibid.

resisted, and Presidents continued to come from the classic professions such as the clergy. Many of them made the broader point with their agricultural constituents that the purpose of the university was not to teach how to plow, but the reason for plowing at all...⁴⁹

Ohio Governor Rutherford B. Hayes, later a member of Ohio State's Board of Trustees, even spoke out on his interpretation of the Morrill Act,

It is evident that the intention of the enactment is to institute a new and distinct species of education. This was to be the instruction of the industrial classes, within themselves, and in that which pertains to their own callings, in order that they may make practical and manual application of it, incidentally for their own benefit, but actually for the increase of the national production of wealth.⁵⁰

The victorious argument, in Ohio at least, was finally articulated in Ohio State's formal objectives: "1st, to furnish a good general education by which the youth of Ohio shall be fitted 'for the several pursuits and professions of life.'...2nd, to produce opportunities for those who wish to pursue special studies." ⁵¹

This delineation between a broad education and narrow or practical education is very relevant to the investigation of the Morrill Act's intent. There is a strong distinction between universities whose purpose is to teach farmers, and universities whose purpose is to teach farming. Was agriculture to be the subject of these institutions because the teaching of agriculture was intrinsically good? Or was agriculture to be the subject of these institutions because that was the curriculum that could attract and serve the

⁴⁹ Johnson, *Misconceptions about the Early Land-Grant Colleges*, 42

⁵⁰ Pollard, *The History of the Ohio State University*

⁵¹ Ibid.

industrial classes? President Williams of Michigan's agricultural college promoted a curriculum that allowed a farmer to "learn to observe, learn to think, and learn to learn." Certainly, this type of curriculum was focused on teaching farmers, not to simply teach farming. Senator Morrill must have been aware of and understood the philosophy of Michigan's agricultural college and the important implications of distinguishing a broad from narrow curriculum. This knowledge and insight would have certainly influenced his intent when writing what was later to become open to debate.

The language of the bill itself provides many clues about its original intent and the corresponding philosophy advocated by President Williams in Michigan. Upon dissection of its language, one can start to distill the Act's intent both in reference to curriculum and to whom was to be educated:

...to the endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.⁵²

In order to promote the liberal and practical education of industrial classes...

The words, "in order to," have significant meaning for the subsequent language of the Morrill Act. Reading above "in order to," seems to imply the "how" of the Morrill Act, while reading the rest of the Act below "in order to," seems to imply the "why" of the Morrill Act. It is from this phrase and interpretation that there arises a conflict between

⁵² NASULGC, *The Land-Grant Tradition*, 12

the two intents of the Act that were introduced at the beginning of this study. If “in order to” does signal the intent of the Morrill Act, then the conclusion is clear. “To promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes” directs the colleges to once again teach both the classics and the new fields of agriculture and mechanic arts.

The phrase, “In the several pursuits and professions in life,” adds more evidence that the Morrill Act’s intent was to provide for the teaching of both the liberal and practical sides of a man.

On many occasions, Senator Morrill shared his own perspective on the intent of his historic legislation. His own words taken from speeches in 1887 and 1888 provide the final perspective on the original intent of the Morrill Act of 1862. In 1887, at the University of Massachusetts, 25 years after the passage of the Act, Senator Morrill said,

The land-grant colleges were founded on the idea that a higher and broader education should be placed in every State within the reach of those whose destiny assigns them to, or who may have the courage to choose industrial locations where the wealth of nations is produced; where advanced civilization unfolds its comforts, and where a much larger number of the people need wider educational advantages, and impatiently await their possession . . . It would be a mistake to suppose it was intended that every student should become either a farmer or a mechanic when the design comprehended not only instruction for those who may hold the plow or follow a trade, but such instruction as any person might need--

with ‘the world all before them where to choose’--and without the exclusion of those who might prefer to adhere to the classics.⁵³

Senator Morrill says directly that the colleges were founded on the idea of providing higher education to the masses, not on the idea of providing agricultural education to farmers. He spoke again on the subject of the usage of the phrase agriculture and mechanic arts versus the scientific and classical studies. He clearly explained what he meant by “without excluding other scientific and classical studies.” Before the Vermont Legislature in 1888, he said:

Only the interest from the land-grant fund can be expended, and that must be expended, first--without excluding other scientific and classical studies--for teaching such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts--the latter as absolutely as the former. Obviously not manual, but intellectual instruction was the paramount object. It was not provided that agricultural labor in the field should be practically taught, and more than that the mechanical trade of a carpenter or blacksmith should be taught. Secondly, it was a liberal education that was proposed. Classical studies were not to be excluded, and, therefore, must be included. The Act of 1862 proposed a system of broad education by colleges, not limited to a superficial and dwarfed training, such as might be supplied by a foreman of a workshop or by a foreman of an experimental farm. If any would have only a school with equal scraps of

⁵³ Justin S. Morrill, Address 1887. Reprinted under title, “I Would Have Learning More Widely Disseminated.” (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1961)

labor and of instruction, or something other than a college, they would not obey the national law. . . .

The fundamental idea was to offer an opportunity in every State for a liberal and larger education to larger numbers, not merely to those destined to sedentary professions, but to those much needing higher instruction for the world's business, for the industrial pursuits and professions of life.⁵⁴

Senator Morrill distinguished clearly between the value of classical and scientific studies and the value of agriculture and mechanic arts. He goes further to say that colleges that only offered a technical training, where instruction was equal to hands-on labor, could not call themselves colleges nor would they be fulfilling the legal intentions of the Morrill Act. Finally, Senator Morrill reaffirms that the purpose of the Morrill Act was to provide higher education to all people in every state. Specifically, he wanted to reach those people who do not have sedentary professions, or desk jobs, but rather those who are actively engaged in the manual and intellectual occupations.

The question of broad or narrow education was settled with clarity and firmness. Colleges of agriculture clearly fell within the domain of the Morrill Act. More important, the Act foresaw the importance of much more than agricultural education for land grant universities. At the same time, the developing colleges also reached a second conclusion. The colleges rightly saw that the purpose of the Morrill act was not to prescribe what was to be taught, but rather who was to be taught. They consciously decided to fulfill their land-grant mission by providing access to those students of the agricultural and working

⁵⁴ Justin S. Morrill, *Address 1888*. On behalf of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College. (Burlington, Vermont: Free Press Assoc., 1888.)

classes through the teaching of agriculture. Their conclusion was reached over the alternative of simply teaching agriculture as the fulfillment of their obligations.

Chapter IV

Effects of the Morrill Act

Compounding the misinterpretation of the intent of the Morrill Act is a misunderstanding of the actual effects of the Morrill Act on The Ohio State University and other land grant institutions early in their development. This misunderstanding persists in current perceptions of Ohio State's unique mission as a land-grant. This chapter will address both the historical and current misunderstandings of the Morrill Act's consequences for Ohio State.

The early institutions supported by Morrill Act land-grants were achievements of new ideas for higher education. However, as a whole for the first thirty years, there were important disappointments in the results. The new universities performed dismally in attracting, retaining, and graduating students, much less students with agricultural interests. "The new colleges were ahead of their times, not the slaves of popular demand."⁵⁵ In fact, the Morrill Act was passed at a time of decreasing national enrollment. "In 1840, the proportion of college students to the entire population was 1 to 1,540; in 1860, it was 1 to 2,012. The supply of college students was not endless. When the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College opened its doors, Miami University of Ohio, closed its collegiate department for want of enrollment and resumed only a dozen years later. One Ohio State historian noted that Ohio experienced "massive statewide indifference" to the news of the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862. The expected high levels of demand from the "industrial classes" failed to materialize.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Johnson, *Misconceptions about the Early Land-Grant Colleges*, 23

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 28

This phenomenon was not isolated to the land-grant college of Ohio. Pennsylvania's land-grant school began in 1859 with "capacity attendance" because 100 students filled the facilities, however a drop to 22 students occurred in 1869, and it took almost 30 years for enrollment to reach 150.⁵⁷ Pennsylvania did better than Maryland, however, which had five Presidents during the eight years after the Civil War. A total of six students graduated during these eight years.⁵⁸

Institutions battled low enrollment by creating preparatory departments to provide education where none had existed before. However, this was not the intended mission of these institutions of higher learning. In general, those institutions that were separated Agricultural and Mechanical colleges did better than their integrated sister institutions. It seems that a specialized school had greater drawing power. Nonetheless, an assumption often made is that these early "agricultural" colleges served the needs of the agricultural community. That was, in fact, not the case.

In 1874, there is no record of agricultural students at the land-grant colleges in Wisconsin, California, Minnesota, or Missouri. Each of these institutions was located in strong farm states and supposedly committed to the agricultural community. "Wisconsin did not graduate an agriculture student until 1878, and that compared with 60 enrolled in law. In Ohio, there were only six students studying agriculture as of 1887."⁵⁹ Accounts of post-graduation plans for Ohio State students show the harsh reality of the actual service to the agricultural community.

...at Ohio State, where only two out of the 93 graduates from 1870 to 1886 were in agriculture, whereas 27 received degrees in engineering, 27

⁵⁷ Ibid., 31

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 39

bachelors of science, and 37 bachelors of arts and philosophy.

Employment records from the university show of the 67 men who graduated before 1886: 23 were in engineering, 12 in law, 11 in teaching, 7 in commerce, 4 in journalism, 4 in medicine, 2 clergy, 1 soldier, and 1 graduate student, with only the remaining 2 classified as farmer and fruit grower.⁶⁰ An Ohio trustee added a demonic note that what he helped govern was as far from God and agriculture as it could get.⁶¹

This uninspiring relationship between Ohio State and the agricultural community had many causes. The financial “panic of 1873” might have encouraged students to stay at home. The deplorable state of public schools in rural areas might also have had an effect. However, from the records it does not seem that Ohio State, as a whole, was committed to serving the needs of the agricultural community. Many land-grant institutions were perceived as lacking in the agricultural communities they were supposedly designed to serve. They became the target of harsh criticism. The federal government was even persuaded to examine the misuse of funds.

The land-grant colleges also attracted powerful enemies. Congress launched an investigation of the institutions in 1874. The Grange followed with a similar inquest, condemning the colleges for their inability to attract agricultural students and vowing to oppose the schools in every way.⁶²

⁶⁰ William A. Kinnison, *Building Sullivant's Pyramid: An Administrative History of Ohio State University, 1870-1907*. (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1970) 133

⁶¹ Johnson, *Misconceptions about the Early Land-Grant Colleges*, 39

⁶² Williams, *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education*, 3

Even for agricultural students who were accepted and began their studies at Ohio State, life was not easy. There is much historical reference to “anti-aggie” sentiments within early land grant universities. Agricultural students became the butt of student humor as in this poem published in the 1888 Ohio State University yearbook,

To dig our Greek and Latin roots
We did not come to college;
But of the earth and all her fruits
To get a store of knowledge.

Our thoughts to beef do mostly turn,
To cabbage and tomatoes;
We want the cheapest way to learn
Of raising big potatoes.

And when we’ve found out how to grow
The rich and luscious pumpkins
Then home to father’s farm we’ll go
And shine among the bumpkins.⁶³

The agricultural organizations and societies did not remain silent about their perceived mistreatment. The “Farm and Fireside” magazine, edited by the former foreman of the Ohio State experimental farm, was an active malcontent. By 1886, the

⁶³ Kinnison, Building Sullivant’s Pyramid, 128

magazine had over a million readers and was distributed bi-monthly.⁶⁴ It published numerous articles concerning the disservice of the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College. An outrage arose, wrote an Ohio State historian, when the name of the university was changed to The Ohio State University. “Farmers charged that the men running the school were ashamed of its lowly mission to provide higher education for the industrial classes.”⁶⁵

The early relationship between Ohio State and the agricultural community was obviously not ideal. The passage of further federal legislation in the late 19th century, which directly targeted agriculture, began to mend hurt relationships. Nonetheless, the perception of agricultural students being the focus of the early Ohio State is clearly false. The demand for the education of the “industrial classes” had not yet begun to materialize, and the leaders of the fledgling college were not going to press the issue.

The Hatch Act and the Smith-Lever Act

It was not until 1887 that federal legislation, quite different from the Morrill Act, targeted agricultural interests not being served by the land-grant universities. The agricultural interests were the primary drivers behind the adoption of the experiment stations and eventually the Hatch Act. Cross tells us that by 1885, “experiment stations began to appear, encouraged by a coalition of interests: prominent farmers, state agricultural societies, boards of agriculture, and state legislatures.”⁶⁶ The absence of land-grant universities in the coalition of interests is notable.

The Hatch Act of 1887 created the agricultural experiment station. This federal legislation authorized direct payment of federal funds to each state to establish an

⁶⁴ Ibid.,132

⁶⁵ Ibid.,131

⁶⁶ Williams, *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education*, 91

agricultural experiment station in connection with the land-grant institution there. The amount of these appropriations was to vary year to year and was to be determined for each state through a formula that took into account each state's number of small farms.

To disseminate experiment station research finding, the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created a Cooperative Extension Service associated with each U.S. land-grant institution. This act authorized ongoing federal support for extension services, using a formula similar to the Hatch Act's to determine the amount of the appropriation.

Detailed investigation of the series of events and circumstances that led to the passage of the Hatch and Smith Lever Acts is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is clear from even a cursory examination of the discourse about the role of land-grants that the two acts have caused tremendous confusion. In particular, the goals of the original Morrill Act, the Hatch Act and the Smith-Lever Act have often been confused or even reported as being synonymous. In fact, both of these Acts were designed to target specifically the universities that had received the 1862 Morrill Act funds. However, both Hatch and Smith-Lever directly address the needs of agricultural communities, rather than incorporating the broader definition of the "industrial classes." These acts codify the three-pronged mission of land-grant institutions to include teaching, research, and service or extension. Although this has become the accepted mission of all land-grant universities, it has also become the mission of almost every other large research university, both public and private.

The fundamental differences between the Morrill Act of 1862 and the later Hatch and Smith-Lever Acts warrant particular emphasis. The objectives for the Morrill Act of 1862 were distinctly different from the Hatch Act and the Smith-Lever Act. Establishing

a land-grant university system, funding agricultural research, and extending the results of agricultural research to end-users each has unique merits. Furthermore, their intended outcomes are easily separated and were never intended to be equal. Neither the earmarked funding of agricultural research nor the funding of extension were components of the Morrill Act of 1862. These were added later. Most important, they were added to primarily benefit narrowly defined agricultural interests rather than the states as a whole.

A Confusion's Lasting Impact

Many times, agricultural research and extension are lumped under "land-grant," which this paper has shown to be incorrect. Contrast the indefensible expansion of land-grant to the following point of view held by a land-grant president. In 1904, at the 17th Annual Meeting of Land-Grant Colleges and Agricultural Experiment Stations, the President of the University of Connecticut, commented on the efforts of extension with regard to the Morrill Act:

I have not spoken of extension work. I do not believe extension work is a proper use of the land-grant college money. That is, we hold that anything you teach at the college in connection with your college's courses is appropriate and may be paid for out of your land-grant college money. We do not do any extension work at the expense of the Federal Treasury.⁶⁷

It is obvious that he understood extension not to be an integral part of the Morrill Act of 1862. One can surmise that such strong language about the narrowness of the Morrill Act of 1862 helped motivate passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914.

⁶⁷ William Oxley Thompson, *How Far Should Land-Grant Colleges Engage in Teaching Elementary Subjects Not Generally Recognized as Belonging to the College Curriculum?* Reprint from the Proceedings of the 18th Annual Convention of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations. United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Experiment Stations Bulletin No.153, 1905.

An important question remains. Is there evidence that the 21st century agricultural community perpetuates the misunderstandings that have been articulated? Farm Bureau is a good representation of the agricultural community in many states with land-grant universities. Both the Michigan and Missouri Farm Bureau Federations list their respective land-grant university as a public policy issue on their agenda. Their statements are excellent representations of the fundamental misunderstanding of the actual intent and contributions of the Morrill Act to land-grant universities. Michigan Farm Bureau states its policy for its land-grant institution:

We will continue to support these and similar efforts and encourage MSU, MSU Extension, AES and the College of Veterinary Medicine to be responsive to agriculture industry needs and realize our Land Grant University cannot survive without a strong Michigan agricultural industry. From animal health diagnostic results, to supporting industry-wide efforts in the field, to the selection of faculty who are chosen to lead our University departments, we urge our Land Grant University to remember its roots and support those who have supported the University in its time of need.⁶⁸

In a similar vein, The Missouri Farm Bureau mistakes the land-grant mission as specifically supporting agriculture:

Missouri Farm Bureau has a long history of supporting the University of Missouri, particularly the teaching, research and Extension efforts in the College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (CAFNR). We believe strongly that a land-grant university is a public university

⁶⁸ Michigan Farm Bureau, internet, <http://www.michiganfarmbureau.com/policy/index>

dedicated to meeting the educational and research needs of the state with a strong emphasis on agriculture. We encourage University of Missouri administrators to follow carefully the basic principles of a land-grant university by providing ready access to students from the public sector, ongoing funding of programs with public funds and the continuation of a strong agricultural research and Extension effort.⁶⁹

Understanding both the confusion of the Hatch and Smith-Lever Act, as well as the misunderstood early relationship with the agricultural community will shed light upon the actual effects of the Morrill Act of 1862. Hopefully, this understanding will allow the agricultural community to understand and appreciate the role of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences in addition to The Ohio State University.

⁶⁹ Missouri Farm Bureau, internet, <http://www.mofb.org/mofborg.nsf>

Chapter V

Conclusions and Implications

This study was guided by three propositions. These propositions underpinned the study's challenge to the agricultural community's current perceptions of what was intended to be distinct about the "land-grant" system. The three propositions were:

1. There is a misinterpretation of the original intent of the Morrill Act of 1862.
2. There is a mistaken notion concerning the actual demand for and impact of early land-grant institutions on the agricultural and working classes.
3. There are erroneous beliefs concerning the current mission of The Ohio State University as it relates to the Morrill Act caused by confusion between the purposes and effects of the Morrill Act of 1862 and the Hatch Act of 1887 and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914.

The study supports all three of these propositions. More specifically, the study leads to the following eleven conclusions:

1. The Morrill Act was rooted in several early developments in American higher education. In 1862, several state governments had already started taking responsibility for higher education instead of leaving it all to religious or private institutions. Individual states were providing some funds for the education of agricultural and working classes. The Morrill Act was the federal government's clear expression of a desire to further extend the policy of higher education for

agricultural and working classes. Furthermore, the Morrill Act that passed in 1862 was not the first attempt in Congress to enact legislation supporting such education.

2. The desirability of and need for public higher education was firmly established before the passage of the Morrill Act. It was clearly understood that neither private nor much of public higher education at the time was including the agricultural and industrial classes. Private colleges had shown no inclination to address this gap in higher education by assisting low-income classes of people.
3. Senator Justin Morrill is appropriately recognized as the driver in Congress of the land-grant approach to funding public higher education in all the states. However, he was neither the originator of the concept nor the first to articulate the need for affordable public education targeting the agricultural and working classes
4. The wording of the Morrill Act supports a curriculum that was broader than agriculture and the mechanical arts. The phrases “without excluding other scientific and classical studies” and “in order to promote the liberal and practical education” clearly show the intent to support broad based curricula.
5. States appropriately used their Morrill Act land-grant monies in a variety of ways to establish land-grant designated colleges. The variety ranged from creation of the first state universities, to the establishment of separated A&M universities, to the formation of A&Ms that evolved to the first state universities. Such variation helps explain the many legitimate differences in the missions and behavior of the early land-grant universities.

6. Most land-grant colleges initially debated whether to follow a narrow or broad based curriculum. In the end, nearly all of the institutions chose a liberal rather than a technical and narrow approach to higher education.
7. The decision to adopt broad-based liberal curricula signaled an acceptance that the purpose of the land-grant colleges was to educate those people who would not otherwise have the opportunity for higher education. This choice was made over the concerns of many in the agricultural community who wanted the curricula limited to the agricultural sciences and the mechanic arts.
8. The agricultural community's disenchantment with the early status of land-grant colleges encouraged their support of the Hatch and Smith-Lever Acts. The agricultural community's discontent led to the limitation of these acts to support specifically agriculture.
9. The Hatch and Smith-Lever Acts were neither extensions nor expansions of the Morrill Act of 1862. The Morrill Act was written to benefit the expansion of higher education to the industrial classes. Both the Hatch Act and Smith-Lever Act were written for the specific benefit of the agricultural community
10. The Morrill Act was not a response to strong demand for higher education by the agricultural and working classes. In fact, early enrollment and graduation rates for land-grant universities make clear that the agricultural and working classes were not attracted to these new institutions.
11. The confusion concerning the historical context, intent, and effects of the Morrill Act persist in agricultural communities in the 21st century.

Implications

This study's analysis and conclusions suggest the following implications for Ohio's agricultural community and the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University:

1. Public research universities have no intent or incentive to accept the agricultural community's traditional land-grant view of what their mission and goals ought to be. Moreover, they have no incentive to copy the research and outreach behaviors of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. Neither the language nor funding of the Hatch and Smith-Lever Acts are applicable to them.

In the sixth report from the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, a framework was laid out for a new covenant for State and land-grant universities. For the University's part, its existing covenant was redefined for the 21st century. Teaching, Research, and Service became Learning, Discovery, and Engagement. "Access for the sons and daughters of low-income and working families" was redefined as "Access for the full diversity of America and lifelong learning contracts with students." "Research and services focused on agriculture and mining challenges of the time" was transformed into "Discovery and engagement focused on the pressing educational, social, economic, scientific, and medical challenges of our times."⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, *Renewing the Covenant: Learning, Discovery, and Engagement in a New Age and Different World*. (Washington DC: NASULGC, 2000) 13

Of the 3,595 institutions of higher education in the United States, 125 are classified as “research universities.” Of those 125 universities, one-third or 43 are land-grant institutions. Out of all research universities, 69 are considered “Research I” institutions based upon their research funding and doctoral degrees granted. Of those 69 universities, 22 are land-grant institutions.⁷¹ It is very clear that the role of land-grant institutions has shifted from educating the “industrial classes” as they were charged in the Morrill Act, to now generating new knowledge and focusing on graduate education, despite very large undergraduate enrollments. Inherent in these statements is the urgency for colleges of agriculture to redefine their positions within their universities. At The Ohio State University, the university at large will certainly not be revisiting its strategic goals based on the urgings of the agricultural community to interpret and adhere to legislation that is 80 to 140 years old.

2. It is in the best interest of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences to integrate itself into the mission of the entire university instead of relying on the Morrill Act to justify its existence.

The population of those employed in agriculture has dropped from over 50% at the time of the Morrill Act to now just 2%. The arguments that validated the existence of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, with regard to the Morrill, Hatch, and Smith-Lever Acts are outdated. The real significance of the College, relative to undergraduate education, is not the subject

⁷¹ George R. McDowell, *Land-Grant Universities and Extension: Renegotiating or Abandoning a Social Contract*. (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 2001) 5

matter that is taught, but rather, that the College serves as an access point to higher education for some students who would not otherwise attend college.

The College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences must become more relevant to the university's high priority goals. This is a reality that will be hard to face for many who are strongly tied to the agricultural community. Understanding the historical context, intent, and effects of the Morrill Act is a first step to recognizing agriculture's current and future role in the university. Re-interpreting the land-grant designation must occur. Otherwise the current expectations that the label promotes are unreachable and will only end with disappointment and frustration of the agricultural community. It is noteworthy that Ohio State's current Vice-President of Agricultural Administration is nowhere on record having endorsed the confused understanding of the Morrill Act of 1862 challenged in this paper.

"Both by virtue of their scholarly aims, and whom they would serve, the land-grant universities were established as people's universities. This was their social contract."⁷² The social contract of the people's universities is being renegotiated. It will be the progressive thinking of agricultural communities that will allow agriculture to continue to be relevant in the universities of the 21st century.

3. It is of vital importance that the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences involve its constituents in the re-interpreting of the Morrill Act and the effects of the land-grant designation.

⁷² Ibid., 3

Open dialogue and education must be a priority in order to bring the constituents along with the College. One final admonition is in the form of a plea for action. Empty, feel-good rhetoric incorporating the land-grant ideal should be carefully separated from serious policy proposals that harken back to Ohio State's misunderstood roots. The wide-ranging usages and interpretations of the Morrill Act not only dilute its strength as a meaningful reference but also weaken its social contract. Only by more deeply understanding the historical context, intent, and effects of the Morrill Act of 1862 can the agricultural community be persuaded to understand and support new directions for the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences and The Ohio State University.

The fundamental misunderstanding of the Morrill Act and consequentially the misunderstanding of the mission of the College and of the University creates a set of expectations that cannot be fulfilled. These unmet expectations for Ohio State to focus its resources on agriculture, accept all those who want to attend, and decrease its focus on reputational rankings will only end in disappointment for the agricultural community. The confused expectations stemming from a misunderstanding of the Morrill Act are neither realistic nor applicable to Ohio State's current reality. The continued misuse and misunderstanding of the Morrill Act is just one of several barriers to the further understanding and effective communication of Ohio State's mission and role in the State of Ohio.

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